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## Wendyl Wants to Know: Sugar and spice and most of it nice

By Wendyl Nissen

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When you're a grandmother, you have to have a lolly jar. It lives in your pantry and your granddaughter sticks her little hands inside and retrieves one lolly for each little fist. She clutches them to herself with absolute joy before inspecting them and then popping them into her mouth one by one. The problem for modern day grandmothers is that choosing the right lolly brings up all sorts of dilemmas. We all know lollies are a treat food, but even treat food needs to be the best it can be for the little darlings. So no artificial flavours, colours or preservatives are a must. But when it comes to sugar, the main attraction of lollies is that they are sweet so there's no cutting corners on that. These jelly babies are part of a big selection of products available in the supermarket and they scrub up well in terms of ingredients. **The Natural Confectionery Co Jelly Babies – \$3.16 for 200g**

**Ingredients** **Wheat Glucose Syrup** Glucose syrup is commonly used in confectionery, but more often than not comes from corn. **Cane Sugar** This is ordinary sugar as you would use at home. **Wheat Starch** This is just like the cornflour you use to thicken your sauces, except it is taken from wheat. **Water Gelatine** Gelatine is used in food as a gelling agent and it is usually made from the collagen inside animals' skin and bones. It is most commonly from pigs, but the producer's website says the gelatine it uses comes from beef. **Food Acid (Citric Acid)** Citric acid is a natural food acid which prevents bacteria growth and gives the citric/sour flavour. **Natural Flavours including orange essential oil** Lovely to see that the flavours used in these jelly babies are all natural and that essential oils have been used. Some essential oils can cause allergic reactions but most are safe and make great flavourings for food, as in this orange essential oil. Peppermint oil is often used to flavour mints. **Fruit juice concentrate** This will be juice reduced to a concentrate and will also be in here to flavour the lollies. **Natural food colours** Extracted from fruit, vegetables and plants (turmeric, anthocyanin, paprika oleoresin, grape skin extract). Great to see natural colourings which have no negative health studies associated with them as do some naturally derived colourings such as annatto and brilliant blue. Turmeric comes from the root which looks a lot like ginger. It is used in curries and other Asian cuisines to colour the food yellow and is also believed to be very good for you. Anthocyanin in Greek means flower (anthos) and blue (kyanos). It can be red, purple or blue depending on the pH of the food and it comes from plants. It is also believed to have some health benefits. Paprika oleoresin from capsicums has a deep orange colour. Grape skin extract can provide purple, violet, blue, magenta, red and orange colour and is also classed as an anthocyanin. **Glazing Agent (vegetable oil, carnauba wax)** Not sure what the vegetable oil used here is but carnauba wax is taken from the leaves of the carnauba palm tree. They grow prolifically in Brazil so no threat of this palm becoming extinct. Both the oil and the wax will be used to give the lollies a shine. **My recommendations** These are mainly sugar and jelly with natural flavours and colours added. All these colourings and flavourings get a tick as being truly natural and unlikely to cause any health reactions in your children. We all know that too much sugar in a child's diet can cause obesity and dental decay among other health problems. Five of these jelly



Photo / Supplied

babies will deliver three teaspoons of sugar but in my opinion depriving a child entirely of lollies will just set up a demand for them, which they will meet whether you like it or not next time they are at their friend's house, or their grandmother's. So I believe an occasional lolly or two as a special treat is a good idea, and these make a good choice for that lolly jar. **Highlights** \* Genuine natural flavourings and colours, and no preservatives. \* Five of these jelly babies will deliver three teaspoons of sugar. \* A great choice for occasional treats. Do you have a food product you would like to see featured in Wendy Wants to Know? Email [wendylwantstoknow@gmail.com](mailto:wendylwantstoknow@gmail.com) with suggestions. Unfortunately Wendy cannot correspond with readers.

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